

6-17-1859

Letter from Samuel Johnson, Salem, Massachusetts, to Anne Whitney, 1859 June 17

Samuel Johnson

Wellesley College Archives

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softened, and, altogether
a better Comphrension
of form perhaps is given
to the poem. I had read
the 'Beatrice' before in Mass,
but had not found so much
tenderness & dramatic power
in it, as now. But I
think I did spare anything
from the book better than
some of the Sonnets, espec.
that of 'Catherine' and
Nos. XIII & XIV, on Night,
and No. IV on Beauty.

Our friends here are
greatly enjoying the gift
you so kindly made them, for

which you will see. The deepest thanks, & many
who will not
know how to tell
you how they enjoy
them & the good
they find in
it. with affection
to all your friends,
I remain your friend,
June 17th 1859.

In those noble poems
you pour fairly out at
least upon their des-
tined work. You may
depend on this, that
whether their 'audi-
ence for the present
be large or small,
they have a rare
path marked out for

them in unfolding the
intellectual & spiritual
as well as the aesthetic
nature of really earnest
persons. What I like
best in them is that
while they descend into
the deeper & sadder ex-
periences of life, and
deal with the highest
problems & mysteries,
they are so full of health
and cheer. They sound
the repose of absolute
truth & calm spiritual

intuition through the
aspirations and conflicts,
and give us the poetry
of the highest philosophy
of life. This, I would
say, smoothes rather
of the preacher's rub
of judgment than the
poets'. But he enters
ultra cupidam - Other
with Emphatic other
merits, as I do these.

The hymn to the Sea
seems to me very much
improved. There are
some sharp transitions